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Ministerial Influence Unconstitutional.

OR, THE
Mischiefs of Public Venality.

—hic vivimus ambitiosa
Paupertate omnes : quid te moror ? OMNIA Romæ
Cum pretio. JUV. Sat. 3.

Earle of Bute



L O N D O N :

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Ministerial Influence, Unconstitutional.

WHOEVER considers the force of habit, either in a physical or moral sense, will not be surprized at the extreme pertinacity, with which old systems and opinions are adhered to; custom exercises so severe a tyranny o'er the minds of men, that many principles and practices, big with mischief and absurdity, are at length patiently submitted to, which had they been at first proposed in their naked and undisguised deformity, would have excited the justest indignation and abhorrence.—The greatest abuses, into which mankind have fallen, have silently and im-

perceptibly stole upon the world ; and custom, that lethargy of the soul, has almost irrecoverably chained men to those abuses, which vice and indolence first introduced.

Perhaps no task is more ungrateful or more difficult than to dispute received opinions : vanity and interest are instantly alarmed, and indolence and timidity shudder at the apprehension of novelty.—Hence it is that schemes of reformation are usually treated with neglect and derision ; and should even the proposer, by the native light of truth be able to convince the understanding, he will seldom enjoy that rare felicity of having determined the will. He will, for the most part, be obliged to take shelter in conscious virtue, from the storms of power and interest, the sneer of folly, and the contempt of ignorance, and console himself by the purity of his intentions for the ill success of his representations.

Truths

*Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land,
All fear, none aid you, and few understand.*

A voluptuous people are always averse to the fatigue of thinking; with such it is a sufficient reason why any system should be continued, merely because it is established. They do not so much mean ill, as, to speak properly, have no meaning at all, and become the bubbles of those who have worse designs, and the dupes of their own moderation. Sordid, narrow spirits are frightened at every shadow of difficulty. Every thing is indeed impossible to him, who considers it as such; but would men once set about what is evidently practicable for them, they would soon find those imaginary obstacles to be the mere spectres of terror and ignorance.

They who are incapable of extending their views, always desire to preserve things in their old channel; not considering that by a tacit acquiescence, we conceal the secret and gradual advances

of evil, and obstruct the necessary remedy, till the disease becomes incurable.—Such as find their account in the continuation of any system, however pernicious, will necessarily exert all that keenness of spirit, which private interest inspires, to ridicule and depreciate all efforts towards reformation. We have thought it thus necessary to lay before the reader, the difficulties arising from habit and prejudice, from interest and vanity, from luxury and indolence, with an intention to preserve his mind unbiassed, as far as may be, in the discussion of our present question, being assured, that we have much more to fear from prejudice than argument in the examination of the point before us.

Notwithstanding the many discouragements abovementioned, no virtuous citizen can behold with indifference a pernicious system of administration.—He may perhaps be able to mitigate that

that evil, he cannot remove, and by a seasonable representation excite the vigilance of his country to guard against the ruinous consequences of a pernicious polity.—*The conducting of government by means of a ministerial majority in parliament*, has been so long the practice, that it is at length become the leading political idea of this country.—The system is openly acknowledged, its necessity and expediency maintained and vindicated, and whole legions of officers ready to die in defence of it.—So consecrated is this idol in the imagination of its votaries, that, in the language of Dryden, they are,

—*in defence of it, as bold,
As if it had been born of beaten gold.*

Though we can by no means agree with the advocates for ministerial dependence, that a system of corruption is necessary to the subsistence of government, we shall however freely acknowledge—

knowledge, that it is too frequently necessary to their *own subsistence*.—We shall not refuse them all reasonable compassion, providing they do not expect our concurrence.—An implicit submission to a minister, and that too from the vilest motives, is an idea much fitter for a Turkish divan than a free people.

There can be no stronger argument urged against so scandalous a practice, than to observe the baneful influence it has, on the morals and principles of its abettors.—Their conduct too plainly shews, that the direct tendency of their system, is to pervert the understanding and pollute the conscience;—for perverted and debased they must be, when persons become so far lost to honour and virtue, as to avow the necessity of corruption.—

To judge of things by their fruits

fruits and effects has been always deemed the best criterion. A sense of shame seldom survives a sense of virtue. Our adversaries by the shameless avowal of corruption, have exposed in the most glaring colours the ill effects of so infamous a position.—

A position so repugnant to the natural sense of mankind, the absurdity of which is so self-evident, that were it not for the alarming reception it has met with unaccountably among all ranks of people, we should stand in great need of the reader's indulgence for presuming to detain him with any arguments in order to refute it.—It will be readily granted that a parliamentary dependence on the minister, is an idea quite foreign to our constitution, and consequently not necessary to its well-being ; for no measure can be requisite to the subsistence of any scheme of polity, with which it has no natural connexion. Our ancestors
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who with such pains and industry gradually formed our excellent constitution, never once imagined that they had devised an imperfect and impracticable system of government; for imperfect in the highest degree must that polity be accounted, which cannot be administered without venality and corruption.—Means these so infamous that they are incompatible with the very idea of liberty, and consequently destructive of our constitution; the forms of which may indeed be preserved, but should such maxims prevail, the spirit and power of it must be extinguished. The vigour of our constitution results from the mutual independency of the parts, without which the ballance is destroyed.—Should a parliament unhappily be seduced so far, as merely to eccho the voice of a minister, the life of the constitution is that moment extinguished. The minister would then become king *de facto*, and

and the form of the constitution would, like many other forms, serve only to amuse and pacify the people.

Here I must observe, that by corrupting the virtue of parliament, liberty is more effectually endangered, than by an open and avowed abuse of power; for in the first supposition it is disarmed, and poisoned in its very source, the principles and manners of its natural guardians relaxed and enervated; whereas in the second, public spirit is alarmed, and the means and necessity of opposition more obvious and practicable.—Corruption never made a necessary part in any system of government. Where the prince is absolute, such an expedient is useless, and every reader must know, that it has ever been the bane and destruction of free states.—Corruption never yet entered into the plan of any legislator, and has always been deemed so infamous, that

it has been the principal concern of all law-givers to exclude and guard against it.

Whatever tends to destroy conscience and honesty, must necessarily undermine government, whose foundations, to be solid, must be laid in private virtue and public spirit.——

The great imperfection of all human governments consists in this, that they cannot easily create sufficient virtue to execute the laws.

A state may make many wise and useful ordinances, but they cannot have their designed effect, unless there is sufficient virtue to give them due execution.——A power must be trusted with men, which is necessarily delegated through a chain of subordinate officers, who unless restrained by principle, will sell that power.

power.—Is it not then evident, that to influence by money or other gratifications, has a direct tendency to inflame the evil, to which all states are liable, and which all law-givers have been eminently studious to prevent? So very opposite is corruption to the idea of all good government, that it is acknowledged by all political writers, that whenever the legislative part of any government, becomes more corrupt than the executive, the constitution must necessarily be destroyed.—Much more might be added, in the way of general argument, to expose the evil and absurdity of so scandalous an expedient; but it is needless to accumulate evidence on so plain a point : and as nobody ever yet attempted to prove the necessity of corruption *a priori* ; I shall conclude the reader satisfied with what has been said in a summary way, and proceed to lay before him such observations as are intimately

connected with the subject of these sheets.

It were perhaps a matter of too delicate enquiry to trace minutely the origin and progress of parliamentary venality among ourselves: the practice is not of very ancient date, and took its rise in a very inglorious reign.—Its beginnings were rude and feeble, and scarcely perceptible till the latter times of James the First; nor was the progress considerable till the worst times of Charles the Second.—However even then its operation was partial and intermitting, and not a stated regular engine of government.—The times are very recent, in which corruption was digested into a compleat system, and became the corner stone of the political fabric.—There are now living some who have beheld the rapid and general progress of this odious principle; but it is to be feared, have lived long enough,

to have seen it infect not only the nobler parts, but, like blood in the animal, to pervade even the minutest capillary in the body politic.—That a minister should be tempted to employ so vile an expedient, is not to be wondered at in the present depravity of man: a thirst of power, that predominant passion of the soul, may easily induce him to employ any means to preserve and extend that power, against all opposition. But that a prince should ever consult to rule by such an expedient, to the diminution of his honour and just authority, is a matter not so easily accounted for.—The truth is, no prince ever abetted a system of venality, but from extreme personal weakness, or because he pursued in some points an interest separate from that of his people.—As no man in private life ever thought it necessary to bribe another to induce that person to pursue his own interest, how should a prince

prince think it necessary to bribe a nation to pursue theirs ? A minister indeed who knows that corruption is the only expedient to maintain his own power, will naturally endeavour to persuade the prince, that it is the only expedient of government. But the prince must be as weak, as the other is wicked, to believe him. A minister, who acts in this manner, in effect makes this modest demand—*Sire, permit me to employ your power, in order to make you my prisoner for the purposes of my own ambition.* Nor would this be an imaginary ascendant acquired over the prince by the minister.—He would not fail upon proper occasions to endeavour to intimidate him, by rattling the chains of a ministerial majority.

The main drift of this pamphlet, is to shew (without any application to times or persons) that a prince of sense and virtue, who would make himself

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acquainted with business and with the characters of men, and who invariably pursued the interests of his people, would never have occasion to purchase the mercenary concurrence of parliament thro' the channel of a minister, but would meet with as little contradiction in effect as the Grand Seigneur.

To confirm this observation by fact and experience, it may be proper to look back to the times of Elizabeth. Her personal character was stained with many vices, and her life full of moral depravity; but the imperfections of the woman were obliterated to the public eye in the great qualities of the queen.— From a general conviction of her sincere endeavours to promote the public good, she met with the most perfect concurrence in all her measures. The nation was sensible, that she pursued their common interest, and repaid her parental
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care with a filial affection.—Thus meriting and acquiring the unfeigned love of her people, she kept her ministers in a due state of dependence, and did not purchase the acquiescence of the representatives of the nation, thro' the favours of a minister, but by the solid support of national affection, defended herself from the insolence of her own servants, as well as from the rage of her foreign and domestic enemies.—Personal imperfections, especially in princes, are always forgiven to public virtue; but if to the virtues of the man you suppose added the great qualities of a king, the union is irresistible. A people under the happy government of such a prince, would resemble a great army, ready to undertake any thing under the auspices of a general who had deserved their confidence.—Nay a zeal for the nation's honour has been often sufficient to palliate in some degree characters of the greatest depravation.—Cromwell, tho' an usurper,

usurper, was a man of sense, and well understood the force of this principle : after having triumph'd over his adversaries in the field, he dazzled the nation with the splendor of his foreign politics.

Popularity must be founded on affection and esteem, and a prince who merits that esteem, cannot fail of being popular, and would be refused nothing by the parliament, because he would ask nothing, that he would be refused by the people.

Few people can share in the favours and gratifications of the crown, but all may enjoy the blessing of being well governed; and it is not conceivable that a vast majority of a free people would ever suffer the good intentions of the prince to be frustrated by the insolent faction of a minister. Supposing merely for the sake of argument, that men could be found infamous enough

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to attempt the obstruction of a good government, what success could such wretches promise themselves against the great body and general interest of a nation?—Even the creatures of a minister might well shudder at the thoughts of opposing the righteous purposes of a prince, seconded by the voice of his people.

A prince, who conscious of his integrity can appeal with confidence to his people, and has one common interest with them, has nothing to fear from the interested opposition of a few particulars. Supposing even (what can never be supposed of a British parliament) that a majority of the representatives of the people was attached to some factious leader; a prince in this case, might order a new representation of his subjects, and the people duly informed, and esteeming their sovereign, as is supposed, would not fail to send him

him such as would more faithfully represent them than the former had done. I have here supposed the greatest difficulty possible, which indeed is most unlikely to happen; for let a prince withdraw his favour from an unworthy servant, and his power falls to the ground: for can we suppose that a great body of men, tho' under some private obligations, would choose to sacrifice their reputation, favour of their prince, and even their most solid interests, to the chimerical hopes of supporting a minister who had deservedly incurred the resentment both of prince and people.——Evidently impossible.——Let a prince by his conduct take care to deserve well of those without doors, and he has nothing to fear from within.

The main body of a nation, with whom power is ultimately lodged in every community, can have no other

interest but that of good government, and their affection will always prove the most solid support of the authority of the prince.—The great body of a people when they see their general interest provided for, are very indifferent as to the hands, in which the prince may think proper to place his authority.—They will not presume to dictate to him the choice of his servants, but, happy if the public is well served, they will freely leave to him, as is their duty, the choice of the instruments.—They will not contend for the particular interests of this or that family, but for the general good of the community, that great family, of which they consider the king as the common father.

A British sovereign at the head of the freest people on earth, may derive *from himself* all the authority and power requisite to his own and the nation's happiness,

piness, and has no occasion to lean on the *broken reeds* of mercenary attachment.

Nothing but national prosperity can be a national object, and consequently a good prince may depend on national concurrence for purposes truly national.

If power is ultimately lodged with the majority of every people, and if it is their obvious and acknowledged interest to be wisely and virtuously governed, it is impossible that the prince should not be always strengthened with sufficient power to give his good intentions the amplest execution.

The people who by their representatives make a third part in the legislature, have a right to be informed, and will judge concerning public affairs; and however unqualify'd they may be deemed

deemed to discuss foreign politics, they are not such incompetent judges, as some affect to suppose, of the internal administration.

The effects of a wise administration in the peace, industry, trade and morals of the society, are too conspicuous not to engage the attention, and too beneficial not to conciliate the affections of the governed.—It is impossible the great body of the nation should ever be mistaken concerning the virtue and vigor of the administration, nor could the rage and calumny of disappointed faction ever induce people to relinquish their own proper experience.

In vain would a spirit of faction ever hope to contend with the legal authority of the crown; and tho' opposition from just motives, may and has exceeded its proper bounds, yet perhaps
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our history does not furnish a single instance, where the crown has suffered from an opposition originally ill-founded.

It is so much the natural inclination, as well as interest of all people to live well with the sovereign, that nothing can disturb that harmony, but the most notorious and cruel provocation: much less could the contemptible resentments of a few individuals, whose disgrace might be considered as a national benefit, ever warp the affection, or diminish the just confidence of the people in their sovereign.

The truth is, all ranks of men sufficiently respect the authority of the crown.—What a misfortune would it be, should the crown alone be insensible of its own authority, and be induced to govern by weak and wretched expedients,

dients, instead of the nobler means of national affection and public spirit !

The constitutional power of the crown is abundantly sufficient to answer all purposes, for which power ought to be trusted, or can honestly be desired. —Should we even suppose a considerable share of that authority devolved on a minister, and by him exercised for bad ends, through worse means, a small acquaintance with modern history may enable us to judge of the weight and influence of such a minister. If false maxims of government can operate thus powerfully, what might not reasonably be expected from the true ? Great and irresistible would be the efforts of that people, whose prince was the common center of their union, which every prince may infallibly be, provided he is sensible of his own authority, and pursues the true ends of govern-

government.—It was the advice of that able statesman, Sir William Temple, to Charles the Second, to be *the king of his people*, with whose affections, he assured him, he might compass every thing he wished, but without them could do nothing.—The history of that prince is well known; as he abandoned the interests, so he deservedly lost the affections of his subjects.

It may be proper in this place, to take notice of some of the most popular objections that have been made to the doctrine we inculcate, which are indeed more formidable by their prescription, than the solidity of their arguments.

I. It has been said, that it is very hazardous to attempt any alteration, in conducting the machine of government, and that matters have gone on tolerably well on the old system, and that new experiments may be dangerous. To which I answer, that the machine

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of government, like other machines, unless its springs be seasonably cleansed and repaired, may very probably stop, and that due purgations may be as necessary to the political as the animal body. That the system we recommend, ought not to be considered as an alteration, but as a restoration of affairs to their pristine and natural state, to their original principles, from which all states, from their necessary imperfection will naturally deviate. A government conducted by corruption, is in as unnatural a state, as a branch drawn by force from its natural position.—Because it is impossible to exclude all imperfection from any system of government, some sinister persons would endeavour to persuade us, that even the greatest abuses were necessary and unavoidable.—I can compare these persons to none more properly, than to such who charge their own voluntary and acquired depravity

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on the original frailty of their natures. But as man in the one case, though naturally imperfect, is not necessarily profligate, so in the other, though government must naturally be liable to some abuse, yet it may very easily be so conducted as to answer very sufficiently its most important ends and uses.—The objection I have cited, might be equally apply'd to supersede the reformation of any other abuse whatsoever.—Had the same absurd and timid idea prevailed with our ancestors, we had still perhaps groaned under the severe bondage of tyranny and superstition. Those who think they find an interest in the continuation of abuse, will naturally be enemies to reformation; but surely it is trifling with the common sense of mankind to alledge, that it is prudent to submit to abuse, because reformation may be irksome; that things are not bad, because we may be able to con-

ceive worse; or that the interest of a few slaves is to be preferred to the vast majority of a free people.

2. It is further objected, that luxury, and the love of money, has taken such established hold of the minds of men, that it is in vain to expect their concurrence, unless their private interests are gratified.

I shall first observe, that all this is mere assertion, and downright begging the question, incapable of being supported, either by argument or experience. The supposition is indeed so very dishonourable, that it ought not to be mentioned, but merely with a view to expose it. Men are not so corrupt and ignorant, as to refuse due concurrence to measures plainly calculated for the interest of themselves and their posterity, and a good prince would propose no other. --No man, to speak properly, has an interest distinct from the common-

monwealth, as no prince can be truly said to have an interest different from his people.—Every man is most substantially benefited both as to his own interest, and that of his posterity, when the community is best served.—No man can be ignorant of this, and if a few individuals could be found so desperate, as to disregard this truth, it is impossible that the majority of an august body, the deputies of the people, the eyes of the constituents upon them, and liable to be dissolved at the king's pleasure, ever should; and we may safely venture to appeal to experience, whether the salutary proposals of the prince have not almost always found the desired concurrence. Some little delays may happen, and prejudices for a time intervene; but truth at the last forces its way, and no groundless opposition can be durable or lasting. To adhere to the faction of a minister, to the prejudice

judice of the honour, liberty, and happiness of the community, is an idea only fit for Cappadocians;—impossible one should think to be conceived among a free people.—Besides it may be argued from the very topic of private interest, how unavailing the factious opposition of a minister must necessarily be.—It is to the power, and not to the person of a minister that men are attached.—Remove the power, and the cement of ministerial confederacy is immediately dissolved.—Considerations merely personal, would even be sufficient to deter men from embarking in unprofitable opposition.

May we not suppose, that many persons, though under private obligation to a minister, would by no means hold themselves obliged to an undistinguishing complaisance for every measure he might think proper to embrace? No
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doubt there are many such, and even they who heretofore knew no other principle, than the desire of getting, would, upon a change of circumstances be no less influenced by the fear of losing.—Let private interest be supposed to have its utmost weight, might not the prince with much more efficacy turn that spring of action to the support of good government, than a minister could to uphold the system of his own ambition? Might not the prince confer as many favours among his parliament as a minister, and that too with less jealousy, as he could have no reasonable motives of preference, but merit and capacity?

“ Not that a wise and able prince would need or require an undue complaisance in parliament, as the proper return for his bounty, or make his favour the price of honour and conscience;

science ; but conferring his graces with due discernment, whilst he benefited the publick essentially, he would likewise strengthen his hands by many personal obligations.”

Must gratitude be supposed less fervent for the honourable favour of the crown, than for the precarious and interested bounty of a minister? A sovereign dispensing his favours with due discernment, would thereby make both publick spirit and private interest cooperate in his administration, and those who were not partakers of the particular bounty of the crown, would in a national sense be benefited by the services done to the community.

Private interest might indeed be promoted by thwarting the corrupt system of a minister, but would meet with certain disgrace and disappointment by a
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peevish and groundless opposition to the salutary measures of the crown.

The true and infallible expedient for a prince to be effectually supported, is to regulate his conduct by the uncorrupted suffrages of his people.

Should a few individuals be inclined to abuse their power and sell their suffrages, yet no purchaser could be found against the declared sense and resolution of the crown.—An uncorrupted parliament must necessarily second the laudable intentions of the sovereign; they will surely attend to their own interests, which they must know to be inseparably connected with those of the community.—It is plain that private interest, so far from being served, would in this case be certainly ruined by factious contumacy.

If any should be found profligate enough, contrary to all assignable mo-

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tives of action, to persevere in wilfull opposition, it would be the evident *interest* as well as duty of the others to blast and stigmatize their malicious purposes.

3. It is farther objected, that a minister by a long possession of power and distribution of favours, may have created such a system of dependance, as to render it almost impossible to transact public business without his concurrence.

This is the great difficulty with which the advocates for corruption would endeavour to frighten us, but will appear upon enquiry to be altogether chimerical, destitute of foundation either in reason or truth.

As there can be no motive for abetting the cause of a minister, but a selfish private interest, when no more recompence could be expected, the attach-

tachment would cease of course.—It follows then, that this last objection of ministerial association, may be resolved into the preceding one, of private interest, and the reasoning upon that head equally applicable to the point under consideration.—The reader must observe, that when a minister is entrusted with great power, that it is not to the man, but to his authority that incense is paid.—They must be very shallow politicians, who don't know that it is the *present divinity*, that is always worshipped.—The servile tools of power, are of all others the most incapable of friendship; and as to gratitude they can make no pretence, for that supposes conscience: *Nulla fides unquam miseros respexit amicos.*

—It were absurd to the last degree to suppose that a prince could be distressed, merely because he vindicated his own just authority, and relied on the voluntary affections of his subjects.

With what success could any person hope to embarrass the sovereign, for doing the most popular and acceptable service to the whole nation? For what can be conceived more popular, than to extirpate the vile brood of corruption, and to be in reality the king of his people? But the truth is, in confuting this pretended difficulty, we are fighting a creature of the imagination.—The case supposed, can never exist in fact, for no man, who ever enjoyed power, can be so ignorant of its effects, as to suppose he could retain his influence, after he had lost his authority.

No man could be found absurd enough to expose himself by such an attempt, nor does our history afford a single instance of an obnoxious and disgraced minister ever making, or even attempting an obstruction to public business.

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We all know, that even delegated power, odiously administered, has met with wonderfull reverence; how then should not supreme authority in the first instance, wisely and honourably exerted, confound all opposition, could any be supposed?—I have now distinctly considered all the objections whose plausibility gives them the least pretence to be examined—Others I have heard of, but they are so silly and frivolous, that they would be scarcely pardonable in the mouth of a pretty woman pensioned by a minister, and could be admitted with no propriety into serious debate.

What honour and happiness might not that prince justly promise to himself and his people, whose example pointed the way to virtue, and whose favour inseparably attended merit?

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A Grand-vizir administration is always odious to the rest of the subjects, who see their essential interests sacrificed to maintain a detestable system of ministerial bondage.

A prince should carefully distinguish between opposition to a corrupt minister, and opposition to legal government : — the latter is an idea only for madmen ; absurd in speculation, impossible in practice. — Never may a prince be unhappily persuaded by a profligate servant, that an honest administration is an impracticable system !

Nothing so easy, so natural, so beneficial. —

The great body of the nation would effectually support it, and even the veterans of corruption would be ashamed to lift up their voice against it. —

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From what topics would it be possible to evince its impracticability? —Not from interest, for it is the acknowledged interest of all to be well governed:—not from honour, for venality can end in nothing, but weakness and dishonour:—not from habit or ignorance, for the great body of the nation has perpetually exclaimed against corruption.—It is demonstrable, there is sufficient power, and we trust there will not be wanting virtue and spirit sufficient to establish government upon its legal, natural and solid foundations.—

Great and innumerable are the evils which ensue, when corruption becomes the governing principle of a state.—It is necessarily attended with an universal depravation of morals, the severest evil that can befall any nation.—If states

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are happy in proportion as they are virtuous, it is evident that a system of venality must equally poison their happiness and weaken their power.—Corruption manifestly destroys that generous emulation, that sense of honour and virtue, which is the source of all great and heroical achievements.—Little could be expected from that people, where money was considered as the only measure of esteem.—Vice, luxury, extravagance and imbecillity would form the national complexion—As individuals will necessarily attend to what they conceive to be their interest, it has been the object of all wise governments, to make public virtue as much as possible the road to private happiness ; but corruption tends to disunite these principles, which good policy should connect as close as possible.

Those whose minds are debased by the sordid principle of self-indulgence,
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will make all considerations center in themselves.—With such their country will be considered as an object of plunder, not of regard.—Insatiable in their desires, they will be little delicate in the means of gratification, and be ready to sacrifice all honourable considerations to the mean purposes of their own illiberality.

It would be the most impudent effrontery for any person to pretend to serve a nation, and at the same time to corrupt its virtue, and render the love of money predominant, which is affirmed by the highest authority, *to be the root of all evil.*

'Tis the very empiricism of politics to imagine that the love of money could supply the defects of virtue, ability and public spirit.—Money can only be coveted on the motives of avarice and luxury, than which no better expedi-

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ents could be found, to debase the mind or debilitate the body. The effects of corruption must ever be as infamous as the cause, and the necessary connexion between causes and consequences must be dissolved, before national honour and happiness could be derived from so impure a fountain. As a system of corruption destroys the morals, it sheds likewise the most pernicious influence on the genius and literature of a nation.

If talents of every kind are in a good measure cultivated in proportion to the esteem in which they are held, and the interest annexed to those pursuits, how discouraging to genius must a system of venality be, that knows no other merit but that of *voting*! What esteem or what encouragement could the sons of science hope to receive from a rapacious and money-loving people! Neither virtue or capacity would be considered as the road to distinction and
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emolument, but election—power and servile prostitution.—Men of a liberal turn would disdain to be employed in the vile drudgery of corruption, and folly and infamy would shun the torch of letters. Men would naturally decline pursuits which they knew to be unprofitable, and betake themselves to more thriving occupations.

Let it not be deemed an objection to the inferences we have drawn, that a nation, tho' much enervated by corruption and luxury, may be animated by a minister of probity and capacity, into a temporary exertion of spirit and ability.

This may very naturally happen, when a nation is not arrived to the last degree of profligacy, and the public danger pressing and immediate. The objection proves nothing against the natural bad consequences of corruption, but on

the contrary displays them in the strongest colours.—The recovery here supposed is effected by patriotism and public spirit, and shews the necessity of recurring to the true maxims of government.—If the banefull influences of venality had not in some degree been counteracted, the nation must have well nigh been undone.—It will still remain invariably true, that in proportion as corruption prevails, the strength and vigour of a nation decline,

The recovery of an abandoned people under a wise and able administration, may serve further to shew, how much it is in the power of governors to model a nation. The political vessel is no less obedient to the steerage, than the nautical,

A good government will always make a good people.—A prince of ability may always excite in his subjects the
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same glorious ideas which reign in his own mind. Men will not fail to cultivate those qualities, which the sovereign is known to encourage and admire.

Regis ad exemplum, would be one of the most successful methods of propagating virtue.

The natural reverence for authority, and the expectation of notice and recompence, could not fail to attach people to such principles and pursuits as were recommended by the crown.

A system of virtue and capacity, enforced by the supreme authority, would soon be found an over-match for the most desperate efforts of the patrons of venality.

It may be proper here briefly to consider what would probably be the conduct of a corrupt minister, with whom a prince should be unhappily induced to lodge his authority. He would represent

sent to the sovereign, as discontented with the establishment, all those who had courage and honesty sufficient to oppose his wretched administration.— That is in effect, he would proscribe a part of the nation, to furnish himself with means to govern the whole.— Under the pretended necessity of protecting the prince from imaginary dangers, he would monopolize his authority for the purposes of his own ambition.—Discontent with measures, however well founded it might be, he would not fail to construe into disaffection, and would thence plead the necessity of multiplying a pecuniary dependence on the crown, in order to create a real dependance on himself. The prince would be taught to believe that he was surrounded with his enemies, and that the creatures of the minister were the janizaries who supported the throne.

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A corrupt minister would avail himself of the odium he excited, and make it a pretence to enlarge his own authority.—Hence the plausible pretext of vast supplies, and numerous forces, and a multiplication and subdivision of employments beyond the reach of computation.—It is even possible that discontent from aggravated ill-usage might ripen into disaffection, and that persons from being considered as enemies, might really become such; all which mischief an equal and generous policy might happily have prevented.—

Under a corrupt and venal system of government, even the most venerable bodies might be aspersed and calumniated, on the most frivolous pretence imaginable.—Was the favour of a prince impartially extended to the desert of all his subjects, the minister
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would have less to bestow on the minions and parasites of his own power.

Should a prince have private interests and predilections that interfered with the good of his people, (the only assignable motive for not trusting a free parliament) a corrupt minister would not fail to flatter those opinions, though at the expence of the honour and welfare of his country. Nay, he would turn those unhappy prejudices of the sovereign, to the furtherance of his own ambition, and thereby create an unnatural dependance of the prince upon the minister.—

When once a corrupt servant of the crown, gets possession of the power of a state, an ardent desire to continue and extend that power, will drive him to the most shameful and scandalous expedients to maintain it.—A man who sticks

sticks at no measures to acquire power, will scruple none to defend it.

A parliament, which is the mouth of the people to represent their grievances and opinions, might through corruption be made to speak the language of a minister, and vote dishonour to be dignity, extravagance to be œconomy, vice and ignorance to be virtue and capacity;—in short, to out-vote the common sense, as well as feeling of the community.—The wretched hirelings would not consider that they were bought with their own money, and that for a present morsel they sold the valuable inheritance of wealth, honour, and security to themselves and their posterity. It is very certain that a nation might be reduced to the verge of destruction by a profligate minister, without any interruption of the ordinary course of justice, the internal tranquility, or the pleasurable amusements

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of the people.—Nay, a corrupt minister would be forward to encourage every mode of expensive debauchery, in order to render men indigent and necessitous, and consequently more dependent on his bounty.—The reader's patience would be exhausted before a detail of this labyrinth of iniquity could be duly accomplished; let it suffice to say, that the consequence of such a system must be vice, ignorance, rapine at home; distress, contempt, imbecillity abroad.—

I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of congratulating my country on the pleasing prospect of deliverance from ministerial bondage, that great source of national debt, moral depravation and public dishonour.—The amiable prince who fills the throne, has declared himself the enemy of corruption: as he would scorn to impose, he will likewise disdain to wear the fetters of
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of venality. He will make his ministers no less than their fellow-subjects respect his authority. He will not lend his name to a faction, or his power to a minister, to bring himself into a state of dishonourable dependance. Secure of the affections of the people, by pursuing the common interests of the nation, he will not be intimidated with resignations, or frightened by factious contumacy into disreputable compliance. He will be sensible that it is the mis-applied favour of the prince, that alone can give strength to the faction of an artful minister.—From innumerable examples in both ancient and modern history, he will not fail to observe the great danger and folly of an unlimited complaisance for any one favourite.—His firmness will soon surmount the obstacles which selfish interest opposes to public happiness.—He will have no private views to conceal,

ceal, no separate interest to promote. As the public good will be the fixed object of his attention, he will never exert his influence for the protection of infamy, or the palliation of absurdity.—No errors of opinion, no misfortunes arising from accident, to which all states must be liable, will ever disturb the national affection and confidence.—A prince conscious of his integrity, may always appeal with confidence to his people, nor will they ever fail to repay his generous labours with all possible fidelity and gratitude.—He will make the laws the measure, and the public happiness the object of his government.—Above all he will promote to the utmost a sincere, vital spirit of religion, as the only solid foundation of public and private virtue.—The present circumstances seem highly favourable to establish a true system of policy.—The stale pretence of disaffection is at an end, and at no period was there

there ever more national harmony.—

A young prince of the best dispositions, revered by the public, disentangled from systems, unaccustomed to wear the fetters of venality.—We are also upon the eve of a new parliament, to the constituents of which I would earnestly recommend, to try for once the effects of a free, uninfluenced representation, remembering that they who are bought, cannot complain with justice that they are sold.—Let then my fellow-citizens with a spirit becoming Britons, spurn the vile bondage of corruption, and second the noble views of their sovereign, whose glorious ambition, we doubt not, will be to convince the world, that he is *in reality the king of his people.*

F I N I S.